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BROADCASTERS VICTORY COUNCIL

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NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC.
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June 9, 1942.

THE SHAPING OF THINGS TO COME **

We're fighting this war for a purpose. It's the biggest, single purpose, involving the most people and the greatest productive and destructive forces since this little planet became the home of man. We're fighting a war for freedom of life and thought and the other basic liberties which we once took as much for granted as the wind and the sun and the stars. But it would be foolish if we became so engulfed in the grimness of war that we forgot what kind of world we're fighting for.

It is not too soon for broadcasting to turn thoughts of the American public ahead to the post-war world. Its foundations must be trued up and set with hard mortar before we can expect to build a lasting future on them. Radio - now - should begin to encourage discussion, thinking and planning for the post-war period. Not, you understand, with a breezy optimism that might lead our people to think that the war is wellnigh won. Unfortunately it is not. The issue is still in doubt. It would be even more in doubt if America were falsely lulled to the point of slackening its efforts.

The Office of Facts and Figures has called upon broadcasting to shoulder this growing task. "Most Americans," says the OFF, "hope vaguely for a post-war world of peace and prosperity. Few have any idea of how to achieve such a world, while many have no hope of getting anything but a world of international unrest and depression."

"The truth is that the post-war world will be what we make it. There are social and economic forces at work, even while we are at war, which, if guided, can assure for ourselves, and those who follow us, the world for which we hope."

THE WAY IT CAN BE DONE **

The American people, as the OFF points out, must first decide what manner of post-war world they want. Only by discussion and intelligent thought can this be crystallized - solidified into a national resolve. Then, having set the goal, next must come planning and logical progression toward it. Every citizen must participate. We have seen in history what happens when post-war periods build themselves. Ours must be built and moulded carefully, and it can only be lasting if every American feels an obligation and a stake in its shaping.

What can radio do? A very great deal. Radio must stimulate the forethought, discussion and planning. These are ways that the OFF suggests:-

1. It must, by example, make an effort to turn peoples' thoughts to the kind of world in which they'd like to live, scheduling broadcasts on this subject and letting listeners hear others discussing it.

2. Radio must make available to listeners the dreams and plans of the great American and democratic thinkers of yesterday and today - the ones who have set down the broad outlines of what we have come to call the American dream - life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness. It must highlight the thoughts and plans, already in existence, that are consistent with the fundamentals upon which our way of life rests.

3. Radio must foster discussion and the planning by presentation to its audience of the ideas and viewpoints taken by competent persons already giving thought and discussion to the subject.

4. Radio must remember that the liberty-loving peoples of the world today stand in somewhat the same position as did the founders of America during the Revolution. A war for freedom was being waged then - but in its most critical moments our American leaders still studied the writings and plans of dreamers-after-liberty in all ages. They accepted some ideas, discarded others, discussed suggestions, formulated plans - and so moved inexorably toward the birth of the American Constitution.

It's much like that today. The post-war world is ours to make as we want. The price is preparation; and to broadcasting goes the heavy assignment of encouraging that preparation.

IF YOU HAVE AN IDLE TRANSMITTER **

This week the FCC came up with something new, representing another sane step toward closer wartime inventory of all transmitters in the country. Under the new order - it's No. 99 - everyone who possesses a radio transmitter but doesn't hold a license covering its operation must apply for registration of the unit before June 28.

This means that if you have any old transmitters lying around - equipment that you may have replaced even years ago with newer units - you must send an application for registration to FCC Secretary T. J. Slowic within the next two weeks or so. Blanks may be obtained from Washington or the Commission's nearest field office. A separate application must be made for each individual transmitter.

"By its requirements that all unlicensed radio transmitters be registered," reads the announcement, "the Federal Communications Commission has taken the necessary steps to ascertain the exact locations and amounts of equipment of this kind in the country. Consequently, the Government will be in a position to take measures to prevent use of the equipment by enemy interests, and to determine its availability for our own war needs."

If you'd like a copy of Order No. 99, drop a line to the BVC.

THE SLEEPY SUMMERTIME ** 1 *

The summer - whether the broadcasting industry likes to mention it or not - has always been a time of lax listening and crumpled Crossloys. Contributing factors, of course, have been that most of the big shows go vacationing, so does much of the audience, and very often when the weather is hot the reception isn't.

This summer can't be considered like other summers. America must be alert and keep an ear to the family loudspeaker for inevitable messages of importance that our Government will broadcast from time to time. And, as a lodestone for summer listening, many of the nation's top radio shows will pool their talents and drawing power into two weekly series - called "Victory Parade" and "Victory Theater" over NBC and CBS, respectively.

Air time is being donated by the networks and their affiliates. The type of entertainment participating is best indicated by a roll call to which answers such headliners as The Aldrich Family, Jack Benny, Burns & Allen, Screen Guild Theater, Fred Allen, The Hit Parade, Mr. District Attorney, Bob Hope, The Great Gildersleeve, Rudy Vallee and what-else-do-you-listen-to.

The NBC version started last Sunday, will be heard each Sunday hereafter for the rest of the summer. CBS opens its series on July 20 with the Cecil B. DeMille Radio Theater. No commercial sponsors will be identified with any of these broadcasts, although the shows are to retain the basic format responsible for their popularity. The time usually filled with commercial announcements is to be given over to government war messages.

It's a novel and appealing notion, and one that might well be copied by smaller networks and even independent stations. Mobilize your top favorites for the summer months, maintaining the program caliber at as high a level as possible, and keep your audience alertly available for whatever should reach its ears. There must be no summer slump in the job that broadcasting is doing for freedom and toward victory.

A NEW SLANT **

In step with a wave of governmental drives to encourage public consciousness of our need for more salvage - things like iron and steel scrap, old rubber, non-ferrous metals, tin cans, fats and grease from kitchens - a private campaign will shortly be waged by the American Iron and Steel Institute, an association representing the industry of the same name.

Radio, in addition to newspapers and magazines, is slated to share an appropriation ranging between \$1,500,000 and \$2,000,000 that has been earmarked for this purpose.

The drive, of course, is an educational affair, telling the public primarily how old chunks of iron and steel now rusting luxuriantly in the fields, attics and backyards of America are sorely needed to build weapons. The need for other types of salvage, however, will not be slighted.

The advertising campaign, which has the blessing of the WPB, marks a pioneer step in such industry-initiated activity and is expected to get under way next month.

IF YOU HAVE SOME HAMS AROUND **

Interesting - although not directly pertinent to broadcasting - is a report that next week the FCC may issue rules and regulations, plus a formal order, for a "war emergency service" whereby radio amateurs and other auxiliary services could provide civilian defense communications when needed. The set-up would function only during or immediately after actual

raids or sure-enough raid warnings, and as a supplement to existing facilities that might not be quite in the pink after a certain amount of bomb dropping.

The FCC and the DCB have still to issue the formal order, make up the rules and regulations, and got together with the OCD on a manual of procedure. Applications for participation in this war service will not be received until these preliminaries are completed, and then only via local governments, municipalities, selectmen or how-do-you-run-your-town? Stations will use u.h.f. (ask your chief engineer what it means) with low wattage.

We bring up the matter because once upon a time there used to be a great number of radio amateurs among the broadcasting profession. It seems to us that any station which still has a few ungobbled-up hams on its staff could well organize them into a civilian defense unit and give them a hand with their equipment as a further contribution to the war effort.

A LOW BOW TO HOLLYWOOD **

Every now and then something comes along that's so pertinent and timely it demands mention - and we give it that, even though we may be accused of blowing a brazen horn for a strictly commercial venture. There's a new movie called "Mrs. Miniver." We're not concerned with who produced it and who plays in it. More important is the fact that it's a moving and most eloquent dramatization of England's people at war. Our war. It has no phoney drama, no hands clasped to brow, no dialogue that sounds like the heroine sat down and tried it out first on a typewriter.

We mention this picture because we think maybe radio writers and producers could get a much better understanding of the nature of our British allies if they took time off to see it. One of the truly important things radio must do, and right now, is give the American people a fuller, richer idea of the human sacrifices and the superb morale that, among other United Nations, have become an inseparable part of daily life.

You can read, of course, about all this. You can sense it in news stories of instinctive heroism and quiet bravery. But "Mrs. Miniver" is unique because, as a pictorial record, it captures the spirit which others have fumbled to express with words. It's the same spirit that should rule your broadcasts about the United Nations and be recognized by our people when they think about their allies.

That's why we believe radio people should see "Mrs. Miniver." It doesn't matter to us whether you pay admission, sneak in a side exit, or wrangle a pass from the theater manager. (Furthermore, in the latter eventuality, we don't suggest you give the picture any free plugs over the air. That's something else again.)

BEWARE OF THIS ONE **

To all stations this week the BVC sent the following and self-explanatory wire:- "General Advertising Agency, Los Angeles, California, sending one minute announcements to stations in reference to selling a book called 'Fearless Motor Fuel Formulas'. We feel these announcements are definitely contrary to government policy and the war effort. We are

checking further for full details. Will be given in next week's newsletter. Suggest you do not accept these announcements until you read newsletter and thoroughly check. (Signed) John Shepard, 3rd., chairman, Broadcasters Victory Council."

There is a good deal to this that bears investigating much more deeply. The BVC, however, wants first to have its facts straight. Next week we'll give you information on how Washington looks upon such opportunism.

CONCERNING CENSORSHIP **

To keep you tipped off about what's coming, we'd like to report that the Office of Censorship is definitely considering a full revision and clarification of its "Code of Wartime Practices for American Broadcasters." In prospect is a new slant on the handling of much war news, particularly in cases where delayed radio releases are delayed so long that newspapers seem to scoop the broadcasters completely.

The Office of Censorship will be meeting this week with a number of stations and networks for the purpose of discussing the provisions of the code changes. They must then be submitted for approval to various government agencies which are concerned in the application of the code and, if given a go-ahead, should be ready for distribution within the next two or three weeks.

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